

At The Crossroads of Eternity

by The Queen of Asgard

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Summary: Commander Shepard gave her life to save the galaxy from the Reapers. Or, so she thought. Waking up from a cryosleep being thrown into a war with an unknown enemy isn't how she wanted to spend her afterlife but it's in her blood to be a hero along with her new ally, Master Chief John-117. Can you lead a new life when you left so much behind in another one? HIATUS!

At The Crossroads of Eternity

Shepard was at a crossroad. How could she possibly make this decision? How was it hers to make? No. Of course it wasn't. Well, then againâ€|Wrex had said it perfectly. She had already done the impossible and had united the galaxy. Didn't that give her the right to stand here and choose the destiny of those who would come after them? What had she said before? She was deciding the fate of every mother, every son and every unborn child. Oh why did those words ring so true at that very moment?

She bit her lip and tasted blood, just adding onto the long list of injuries she was going to sustain during this final battle. Of course, it probably wouldn't matter in the long run, seeing as how she may be dead in the next few minutes. She tried to sigh but the wound at her side made it physically impossible and she doubled over slightly as the Catalyst watched on, indifferent.

"You must choose," He reminded her as she eyed her options again. There was destruction, the ability to destroy the Reapers but all synthetic life would be destroyed and she wasn't quite sure she could be the one responsible for more strife in the galaxy.

Of course there was always control. Take over the Reapers and give herself away only to remember what she once wasâ€|what she could have beenâ€|The Illusive Man had tried to take this path only to fail. Shepard closed her eyes, trying to shake the image of the Illusive

Man's muddled face and sneering mouth out of her mind. Would she become like him? The Catalyst had assured her that she wouldn't be indoctrinated but Shepard wasn't too keen on trusting something that was controlling the Reapers themselves.

And then there was her final option: synthesis. The peak of evolution for all species. Could she do it? Could she throw herself into the Crucible's light and find her very essence part of all species?

"The roads are open, you must choose." The Catalyst said as his form faded away and three platforms rose to greet her with open arms. What could she do? She was indeed at the crossroads that would ultimately end in her death but would promise something for life. What would they say, 50,000 years ago when the Reapers would be coming back? Would they tell stories of her achievements or curse her name? What more could she do than this?

She took one last look at the stars, sparkling like silent guardians, urging her on, giving her their blessing. Finally, she took one last look at her options, each looking like a silent, almost unknown death for her. This, however, was what she had trained for her entire life. She had accepted her fate as Commander Shepard so long ago and now she had to look destiny in the eye and tell him that she was ready to come home.

Slowly, on shaking legs, she took one step at a time past the piston that would mean destruction, past the console that would let her control the Reapers. Her eyes were set on one thing. She would make this galaxy great. As she approached the column of energy, she locked eyes on her next and possibly greatest challenge: death. Dropping the gun, she lowered her head and ran at the pillar of light before her feet left the solid ground and her body began to tingle. She didn't even open her eyes as her essence fell away from her body.

A tear slid down Shepard's face as it dissolved under the warm light. Surprisingly enough, dying didn't hurt at all. Actually, it felt good, like being underwater in a hurricane, a peace unlike any washing over the commander. Faces of people she had lost flashed in front of her eyes as her body began to fall away, bit by bit.

However, it was once face that for a moment, allowed Shepard to hold on. Garrus Vakarian smiled at her one more time and she felt his name leave her lips just before they became one with the Citadel.

_"Garrus" _

Commander Shepard was gone.

* * *

><p>Across the galaxy, a green light flared from the Catalyst and reached the far pockets of space, catching everything in its glowing arm. Reapers fell and creatures turned became aware of what they were. Fighting stopped and the war became obsolete. All eyes turned up to the sky and a silent farewell was given to the woman who had saved them all.

_Somewhere on a distant planet, a frigate landed and a crew with

glowing eyes stepped out, one in particular looking rather happy as a man wrapped his arm around her metal waist. She looked up to the sky and like the rest of the galaxy, thanked Commander Shepard for her sacrifice. However, as she did this, she looked down at her hands and smiled._

_ 'I am alive' _

* * *

><p> "Is she waking up?"

_ "She'd betterâ€|Captain Keyes is going to have our asses on platters ifâ€|" _

_ "Oh wait, I'm seeing movement. Standby to open the tank." _

With a hiss, Shepard realized, in amazement, that her world was not over. How was this possible? The Catalyst had told her that her energy would be spread through the galaxy but here she was, listening in on a conversation. Was she in heaven? She didn't realize it would be soâ€|metallic and look so much like the inside of an Alliance ship. A man in green was standing at a control panel eyeing her nervously as a door opened and stumbled out, shockingly heavy.

"Wâ€|what's going on?" She asked slowly, her voice resonating. Why was her body so damned heavy?!

"Sorry to bring you out of cryo so soon, Commander but we've got Covenant ships inbound." He responded as Shepard stood up on shaky legs. Looking down, she was surprised to see she wore a full suit of dark blue armor that looked quite a bit different than her own N7 armor. What the hell was going on?!

"Who are the Covenant? Who are you?!" Shepard demanded as the man made notes on his control panel. It didn't look like anything the Alliance hadâ€|what was going on?! "I need to speak with Admiral Hackett. What's going on with the Reapersâ€|?" She began to babble as the man in green looked at her over his control panel with a look of worry on his face.

"Ma'am, you need to calm down. You know the spike in blood pressure isn't good just coming out of cryo." He came over to her and began running a wand over herâ€|helmet? Why was she wearing a helmet? "Your vital signs are normal, at least. Thank God for genetic splicing, right?"

"Geneâ€|what the hell are you talking about, soldier?"

"Relax, Ma'am," he said sharply before making a note on his datapad, "We'll explain everything in a minute. Now, can you tell me if you remember what happened on Reach?" He asked as she again looked down at her armor.

"Reach? I don't know any planets calledâ€|" She began to say but something stirred in the back of her mind.

_ Hands were wrapped around a pistol as she fired at a shadowy enemy she could not name. They spoke in strange tongues she did not

understand but like the soldier they had trained her to be, she kept firing. Far above her, voices screamed out in panic as a drop ship fell from the sky like an angel. Dropping the pistol, she dove for the men and women in helmetsâ€¦bullets flying around her as she fell.

—

"Iâ€¦rememberâ€¦" She began to say as the man nodded and she looked up.

"Alright. Now, I need you to look up into these lightsâ€¦Thank you ma'am. Now, if you could follow me over here to the optical diagnostic stationâ€¦"

Numbly, Shepard followed him towards a pylon that someone else was standing at. Someone who, to Shepard, seemed oddly familiar. He was tall and dressed in green armor similar to hers. When he finally looked up, she finally saw her reflection for the first time in his orange visor. She wore a helmet just like his and she knew if she could see her reflection that her eyes would be wide and her face would be riddled with scars. For the first time in her life, Commander Shepard was scared out of her mind.

"Commander," The robotic man greeted curtly. She was surprised to hear that his voice was rough and dark, like it had barely been used.

"Do I know you?" She asked as he turned to her and seemed to give her a lookâ€¦somewhat hard to tell when she couldn't see his face. Finally, she turned her attention back to the man who was standing behind the control panels, "Alright, what did you want me to do again?"

"Uh, of course, Commander if you could just step right hereâ€¦I need to recalibrate your targeting systemâ€¦"

Shepard's heart almost stopped when she heard 'recalibration'. It made her think of Garrus which brought on a whole other wave of confusion.

"Where am I exactly?" She asked again as the man cocked his head.

"You'reâ€¦on the Pillar of Autumn, ma'am." He said slowly as Shepard tried to explain the unexplainable.

"Okayâ€¦just tell me what happened after the Reapers left Earth." She said slowly, trying to force down a pounding headache.

"Uh, Reapers, ma'am?" He questioned as Shepard tried to pinch the bridge of her nose in aggravation but found her helmet in the way.

"Yes! The Reapers, you moron!" She snapped angrily, "The things that were threatening everyone! You know what I'm talking about!"

"I think you'd better sit downâ€¦" He began as the man behind the glass coughed lightly and then rapped on the glass.

"Are the SPARTANS up and moving?" A voice came over the intercom as the heavier set technician rubbed the back of his head

sheepishly.

"Well Captain, I still need to run a few more tests on the Commander. She doesn't seem to know where's she's atâ€|"

"On the double, Marine!"

"Roger that, Sir." The Marine turned back to the two, Shepard still feeling mighty confused, "The skipper seems rather jumpy, so we'll have to skip theâ€|"

Suddenly, the ship shivered, like a child on a windy day with no coat. "Oh shitâ€|oh fuckâ€|they're breaking through!"

"What do you meanâ€|what's breaking through?!" Shepard demanded as suddenly, the door behind the man in the glass room exploded and shots were fired. The man went flying back in a cloud of smoke before the man who had been with them shouted something in anger.

"Sam? SAM! Come on, we've got to get you to the bridge." He snapped, leading the way. Shepard stayed behind the man in green as they ran through low hallways and past men and women firing guns at something Shepard never quite saw.

"I should have never joined." A man groaned as he leaned against the bulkhead, a purple crystal looking thing protruding from his belly.

"Come on, this way!" The marine commanded as they ran down another hallway. Shepard felt extremely naked without her gun. Even in a suit of armor she felt like she was exposed and she hated it. Suddenly, the hallway in front of them exploded, the Marine blasted into pieces as both Spartans ducked in surprise.

"Well, I guess that's blocked," Shepard mused as the Master Chief threw her a look over his shoulderâ€|or at least, she thought it was a look.

"Come on, let's go around," he responded evenly as if the man hadn't been blown to bits in front of him. He stepped around her and then jumped over a group of pipes that separated them from the hallway on their left.

Shepard followed as they raced down the hallway. To her surprise, the armor wasn't as heavy as she expected it to be. She could still sprint but it had to be in short increments. She followed closely on the Master Chief's tail, racing past marines who still shot at an enemy that she couldn't seem to see. She itched to get her hands on a pair of pistols and start shooting, the inner warrior breaking through the frightened, confused woman.

"Keep up." The Master Chief reminded her sharply as they hurried down the hallway and a door openedâ€|

That's when Shepard saw it. It was massive, at least 8 feet tall with four sharp mandibles that were covered by armor. It had long legs and a long was nothing like the wise yet strict and serious Salarians or war hardened veterans that were the Turians. This was something completely different. This was something that meant them great harm.

The thing snarled in anger but as began to finally recognize them as a threat, someone fired and the alien fell dead.

"Hell yeah! That's what I'm talking about!" Someone cheered as Master Chief stepped over the creature and continued on his way. Shepard glanced over to see a marine still firing at a group of aliens who were retaliating through a rapidly closing door.

"Seal those blast doors! Move, MOVE!" A woman roared as she fired into the enclosed space, her eyes narrowed in concentration.

A reverberating crash was heard throughout the hangar as an explosion rocked the other side of the door, causing the aliens to scream in pain as they died quick yet agonizing deaths. Shepard stumbled slightly as Master Chief ran over to where a marine had lowered his gun.

"Master Chief, Commander! The Captain wants you on the bridge ASAP!" The marine said with an Australian accent, "Better follow me!"

"Thank you, soldier." Shepard responded as the three walked through an armory that had been changed into a infirmary as soldiers lay every which way, groaning in pain.

"Where's your medigel?" Shepard asked sharply as the marine glanced over and arched an eyebrow.

"Ourâ€¦medigel, Ma'am?" He asked slowly as Shepard sighed and rolled her eyes.

"Yes, your medigel! You should be giving it to these men and women!" She said coldly as the marine shot a look over at Master Chief.

"Sir, what is she talking about?" He asked as the Master Chief remained silent for a moment.

"Just take us to the bridge, marine." He responded as the marine nodded and then pointed towards a door.

"It's just through there, Sir. Good luck."

The two Spartans found themselves walking into a rather large room where men and women worked on computers, talking rapidly with themselves. Shepard wasn't much of a follower but she allowed herself to follow Master Chief as they approached a window that dropped down so that two people piloted the ship.

Her eyes flicked to a man in a stark white uniform who was standing at the controls, smoking a pipe, seeming to be oblivious to the chaos around him.

"Captain Keyes," The Master Chief greeted formally as Shepard watched him for a few moments before the man turned around.

"Master Chief, Commander." He nodded and shook the Master Chief's hand before reaching for Shepard's who took it hesitantly, "Good to see you both; things aren't going well, Cortana can brief

you."

Shepard jumped slightly as a woman's form appeared next to her. She was curvy with short hair and data raced through her body in provocative patterns, "A dozen Covenant superior battle ships against a single Halcyon-Class Cruiser with those odds I'm content with three..." She paused here as she made a face, "make that four kills. Sleep well?"

"No thanks to your driving, yes." The Chief said and Shepard was almost surprised to hear him make a joke.

"So you did miss me," Cortana teased back as Shepard shook her head in anger and confusion. Finally, she could not hold her silence any longer.

"Alright, what the hell is going on here?!" She demanded as both the captain and the woman looked at her in surprise, "The last thing I remember is destroying the Reapers and now you're telling me there's these things called the Covenant and they're trying to KILL us?!"

"Are you alright, Commander?" Cortana asked slowly as Shepard scowled and took off her helmet in disgust.

"No, I'm not alright! I'm confused and angry why nobody is telling me what's going on!" She snapped angrily as she brushed her dark red hair back from her eyes in one sweeping motion.

"Commanderâ€¦I'd tell you but really, this isn't the time. Maybe once we get out of this mess, we can sort everything out." Keyes responded, "Right now, regardless of what you know, we need you. If there's one thing you know how to do is be a hero and as of late, that's what we need."

Shepard's face softened slightly as she looked down at the helmet and stuck it back on her head. If there was one thing she knew how to do it was be a hero. "Alright, what's going on?"

Suddenly, the bridge rocked and the three standing stumbled slightly. Keyes snapped his head up to look at Cortana, "Report!"

The woman looked rather cool for reporting something that made Shepard's stomach lurch, "It must have been one of their boarding parties! An anti-matter charge, at least."

Suddenly, one guy turned in his chair, his face ashen and pale, "Ma'am! Fire control and the main cannon are offline!"

Cortana frowned and rubbed her arms, "Captain, that cannon was my last defense."

Captain Keyes let out a long sigh and pinched the bridge of his nose, his brows furrowed, "Alright, that's it. I'm initiating Cole Protocol Article Two. We're abandoning the Autumn. That means you too, Cortana."

The AI scoffed and put her hands on her hips, "While you what? Go down with the ship?"

"There has to be another way," Shepard interjected as Cortana shot her a look of thanks, "You shouldn't throw yourself away just to save one ship."

"Well, maybe you should let me finish, Commander." Keyes responded as Shepard nodded. He stuck his pipe back between his teeth, "This object we found, I'm going to try and land the Autumn on it."

"With all due respect, this war has enough dead heroes." Cortana snapped bitterly as Shepard looked over at the Master Chief.

"How long has this been going on?" She asked slowly as Keyes glanced over at her.

"It's been going on too long, Commander." He snapped, obviously irritated with her and her lack of memory for this war, "I appreciate your concern, Cortana, but it's not up to me, protocol is clear. Destruction or capture of the shipboard AI is absolutely unacceptable, and that means you're leaving the ship. Lock in a selection of emergency landing zones, upload them to my neural lace and then sort yourself for hard transfer."

Cortana gave a two fingered salute and arched an eyebrow, "Aye, aye Captain."

He then turned to the two Spartans, "Which is where you two come in. Get Cortana off this ship keep her safe from the enemy. If they capture her they'll learn everything: force deployment, weapons researchâ€¦" His eyes narrowed, "Earth."

Chief nodded before answering, "I understand."

He then turned to Commander Sheppard, "Commander, do you feel like you are up for this task?"

Shepard nodded slowly, "You said you needed a hero, Sir. I know that's something I can be."

He nodded and then turned to Cortana who spoke, "The Autumn will continue evasive maneuvers until you initiate a landing sequence. Not that you'll listen but I'd suggest my subroutines handle the final approach."

"Excellent work, Cortana, thank you. Are you ready?"

She closed her eyes before finally opening them, "Yank me."

He did so and then handed the card to Master Chief, "Good luck."

The Master Chief hooked the card into the back of his helmet and Shepard heard Cortana's voice over her own COM link. "Hmmm, your architecture isn't that much different than the Autumn'sâ€¦"

"Don't get any funny ideas."

Captain Keyes took out two pistols and Shepard quickly grabbed her, surprised to find it empty, "Whatâ€¦?"

"I don't usually keep them loaded so you're going to have to find ammo as you go." He said sheepishly as Master Chief took his own

gun.

Shepard nodded and then turned on her heel, feeling power pulse through her body as if her biotics were actually returning.

She was in this world and she had accepted that. She was at war and she had accepted that. She was again a soldier and she had accepted that.

She had come to kick some ass and she had accepted that as well.

* * *

><p>Why is this not the most epic crack pair of all time? They are both kickass soldiers! I mean, come on! Who secretly doesn't want to see Shepard kick the Covenant's butt too? This also came after the idea of "energy only changes form" who says their can't be two Sheps?

**Also, there IS going to be a love triangle between Shepard, John and Garrus. I'm REALLY excited to write that. **

WE NEED FAN VIDEOS OF THESE TWO, PEOPLE. I WILL PAY SOMEONE BIG BUCKS TO MAKE A PAIRING VIDEO OF THESE TWO!

**Also, reviews are great. And favorites. And people following this shit. There will be more to come, I promise. **

Mass Effect (c) Bioware
>Halo (c) Bungie

**Nothing belongs to me, sadly. Oh well. **

**Writing about Self Inserts, **
>The Queen of Asgard

End
file.